

Melconian named OJHL Rookie of the Year



By Jake Courtepatte

Magnificent Mel is leaving one more lasting impression on the Aurora Tigers franchise.

For the second time in the Junior A club's history, a Tiger has been named the Ontario Junior Hockey League's Rookie of the Year, with centreman Mel Melconian taking home the honours.

Melconian was one of few lights in an otherwise dark and dreary season for the Tigers, who failed to make the postseason for the first time since 2011.

In 51 games in a Tigers' uniform, Melconian was able to put up 29 goals and 30 assists, leading the team in both categories. He also led the team in powerplay goals with six.

Stemming from a stellar career in the AA system of the Mississauga Braves organization, he swiftly moved up the AAA ranks two seasons ago before impressing Tigers brass at camp. There he established himself as the team's top centre, combining with winger Eric Holland to often form a lethal offensive combination.

By December he was headed to Cornwall, Ontario for the 2016 Eastern Canada Cup All-Star Challenge, lacing up as a member of Team Hawerchuk. He then earned a spot on Team East in the annual CJHL Prospects game.

Far above and beyond all other OJHL rookies in scoring, he landed among the top twenty-five scorers league-wide by the end of the year.

Scoring points in 39 of the 51 games he played this season, Melconian said perhaps his most impressive moment on the ice was earning his first junior level hat trick in mid-January against the Toronto Jr. Canadiens.

Melconian joins 2014-15's Cameron Morrison as the second Tiger to win the illustrious award, now playing with the Notre Dame Fighting Irish and a second-round pick of the NHL's Colorado Avalanche last year.

With a season of Junior A hockey under his belt, Melconian is continuing his career next season with the Sacred Heart University Pioneers of the NCAA's top collegiate division, saying he is "very excited to start the next step of my career."

The Pioneers, members of the Division 1 Atlantic Hockey, have a long history of drawing from the OJHL, with eleven former players on the roster. Melconian joins Kory Kennedy as the second Tiger alumnus to suit up for the Pioneers, with Kennedy entering his senior season after three stellar years with the Tigers between 2011 - 2014.

With recruiting season underway, no other Tigers have yet made a commitment announcement.